

**Message: Alpha and Omega**  
**By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison**  
**Helping Others Follow Jesus**  
**April 12, 2020**  
**Revelation 1:4-8**

*“Said Conrad Cornelius O’Donald O’Dell, My very young friend who is learning to spell “The A is for Ape. And the B is for Bear. The C is for Camel. The H is for hare. The M is for Mouse. The R is for Rat. I know all the twenty-six letters like that.” through to Z is for Zebra. I know them all well. Said Conrad Cornelius O’Donald O’Dell.*

*So now I know everything, anyone knows. From beginning to end. From the start to the close.*

*Because Z is as far as the alphabet goes.*

(Draw box on whiteboard) We like to put things in categories to help them make sense. We organize reality in a way that makes sense. If I see an ape, a bear, a camel, a hare, mouse or rat - I don’t understand everything about them, but I at least know what they are. OTOH, some things are far beyond me. I’ve never traveled to South America, Australia or Antarctica, nor have I been abducted by a UFO or met Bigfoot. This Coronavirus is a new letter added to our language. For many, all reality is defined by personal experience. If we’ve not experienced it, it really doesn’t exist. We have a “Closed System.” How much of the world’s total knowledge can any person understand? Einstein said he knew less of one-tenth of 1%. He would know a whole lot less than that now. If we’re 10x smarter than Einstein – we’d know 1% of the world’s knowledge. That means there’s 99% of the world’s knowledge we have no clue about.

*Then he almost fell flat on his face on the floor. When I picked up the chalk & drew one letter more. A letter he never had dreamed of before.*

*And I said, “YOU can stop, if you want, with the Z. Because most people stop with the Z. But not me.” “In the places I go there are things that I see That I never could spell if I stopped with the Z. I’m telling you this ‘cause you’re one of my Friends. My alphabet starts where your alphabet ends.*

*My alphabet starts with this letter called Yuzz It’s the letter I use to spell Uyzz-a-ma-tuzz You’ll be sort of surprised what there is to be found, Once you go beyond Z & start poking around.*

The disciples' system was closed because they knew that when someone is crucified, dead and buried, that's their existence ends. Their alphabet ended on Friday. At the crucifixion, they ran out of letters. In the spirit of Dr. Seuss, let me continue the story:

*"C" is for "crucified" & "D" is despair. These awful events were certainly not fair. "H" is for "hiding" consumed by their fears. "R" is regret for wasting 3 of their years.*

*But Jesus had something far different in mind. Death had no hold – it couldn't keep him confined*

*No scourges or nails, thorns, shackles or fetters. Could overcome one who gave us new letters.*

The whole Jesus story transcends "Z." The New Testament says Jesus is God; the **creator** of heaven and earth. He came in human flesh ("**Christmas**"). When Jesus walked the earth, He was the perfect God/man. He healed, taught, preached and disciplined. Jesus ministry was amazing – nothing like it before or since. **Crucified**, dead & buried. What goes in the box stays in box. Then, Jesus rose from the grave (Easter). The whole Jesus story is "on Beyond Zebra." He ascended into heaven, gave us His Spirit, the 3<sup>rd</sup> member of the Trinity. The resurrection changed everything. The resurrection validates everything Jesus said for all time. Awe & astonishment, mind-boggling, unexpected, unbelievable. There is an element of mystery present in the world. Not everything is rational. If I could figure all of this out, I'd not worship Jesus.

#### Revelation 1:4-8

*John to the **7 churches** that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the **7 spirits** who are before his throne,*

*<sup>5</sup>and from Jesus Christ (**WHO** Jesus is: **the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth** Jesus is not like Pilate's or Rome's – Pilate's kingdom was very confused and anxious: The most powerful man in all of Judea's*

final words to Jesus was a question: "What is Truth?" Jesus answered: "I am the way, the truth and the life." *To him (WHAT Jesus has done) **who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood**<sup>6</sup> and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father,*

**WHO Jesus is:** *to him be **glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**<sup>7</sup> Behold, **he is coming** with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.<sup>8</sup> "I am the **Alpha and the Omega,**" Jesus is the **Creator (Alpha** – 1<sup>st</sup> letter of Greek alphabet) Jesus will come again (**Omega** – the last letter of the Greek alphabet). He will save and will judge. Jesus will make things right. *says the Lord God, "**who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.**"**

We know from our experience: there's birth, life and death. That's it. But this is the day of resurrection. It's "On beyond Zebra." "*My Alpha starts where your Alpha ends.*"

This = Revelation chapter 1. Every story has a beginning & an end. This is the way the book begins. At the end of the book, after all the struggles and pain, good prevails. There is a new creation, with a new heaven and new earth.

What happens when we lose something precious to us: a family member or friend, our finances or job, our health? What happens when someone has an addiction or mental illness? We need more hope than the 26 letters we have. "On Beyond Zebra" means Jesus has opened a whole new language for us because He is the Lord God Almighty who has risen from the dead. That is our hope.

We can be **patient** because of it. Paul wrote:

*"We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears, and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us! 1 Cor 13:12*

### **Application**

We can't save ourselves. We can't resurrect ourselves. But He can. I only know one source of hope, one source of faith, and one source of eternal love.

We can stop with the Z like Conrad Cornelius O'Donald O'Dell – or we can move from a closed system to an open one.

Open your heart to the Alpha & the Omega. Jesus isn't some memory we're trying to preserve. We are invited to have a personal relationship with Him now. ***Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and OPENS the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*** Revelation 3:20